



# DAWN AND THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNITY

## Fact Sheet #9

June 2005

***"We have been using DAWN to track ED visits involving methamphetamine, which appear to be associated with HIV/AIDS cases in our city."***

***—San Francisco Epidemiologist***

### WHAT IS DAWN?

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The Drug Abuse Warning Network, DAWN, is an active surveillance system that provides information on the impact of **drug use, misuse, and abuse** on public health.

DAWN tracks visits to hospital emergency departments (EDs) and deaths that relate to the use of drugs. DAWN cases include: **illegal drug use, adverse reactions** to prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications, **overmedication, accidental ingestions, malicious poisonings, suicide attempts, seeking detoxification,** and **underage alcohol use.**

### WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE?

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DAWN provides three types of information:

- **Annual, statistical estimates** of drug-related ED visits for the Nation and selected metropolitan areas;
- **Annual profiles of drug-related deaths** in selected metropolitan areas and States; and
- **Real time, de-identified surveillance data** on the drug-related ED visits that have been electronically reported to DAWN.

### HOW IS DAWN USED?

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**Annual estimates.** Public health agencies can analyze patterns of drug-related emergencies in their metropolitan area; and compare them to patterns in other metropolitan areas and nationally. *DAWN Interim National Estimates* from 2003 show:

- Cocaine was involved in one-fifth of the ED visits related to **drug abuse**;
- About one-third of **adverse reaction** visits involved anti-infectives; and

- **Suicide attempts** primarily involved central nervous system (CNS) agents, mostly pain relievers, and psychotherapeutic agents, including benzodiazepines and antidepressants.

**Surveillance.** Public health authorities can become designated users of DAWN *LIVE!*—DAWN's Internet-based query system. With DAWN *LIVE!*, they can monitor drug-related events in real time to:

- Identify new drugs of concern;
- Confirm recent patterns identified in other metropolitan areas; and
- Run special inquiries on new public health priorities.

### HOW DOES DAWN WORK WITH THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMUNITY?

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Since its re-design, implemented in 2003, DAWN has been working with local, State, and Federal substance abuse and public health agencies to learn about their priorities and get feedback on DAWN services. These interactions with DAWN users have helped to target DAWN services to better meet user needs.

Organizations involved with DAWN:

1. Receive DAWN publications, including:
  - Annual estimates of drug-related ED visits;
  - Annual profiles of drug-related deaths; and
  - Short reports, published periodically, highlighting special topics.
2. Alert DAWN staff at SAMHSA about new and emerging needs for information.
3. Serve local needs for DAWN surveillance data as authorized users of DAWN *LIVE!*

***"We are pleased that DAWN can give us metro area data, as well as center city information. We want to intervene early with prevention and treatment services."***

***—Detroit Public Health Practitioner***

***“Since DAWN is continually being updated, I run monthly reports on DAWN Live! to keep our service providers informed.”***

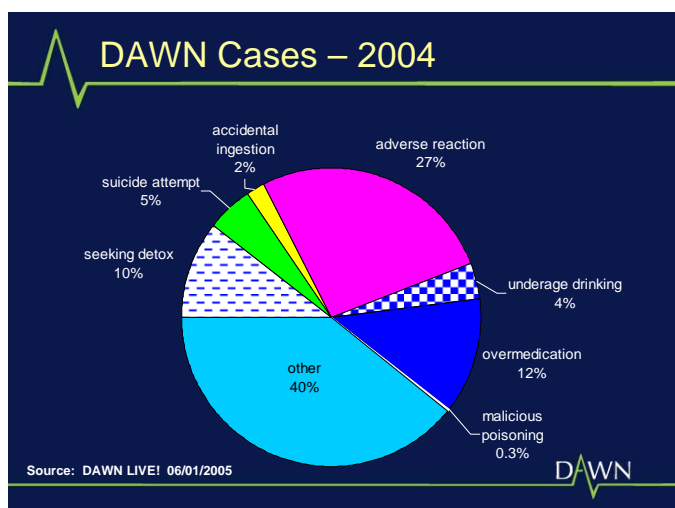
***Colorado Information Director***

## **WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF DAWN INFORMATION?**

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For 2004, more than 400 hospitals reported more than 300,000 cases to DAWN. The pie chart below illustrates the mix of cases from the surveillance data in DAWN LIVE!.

National and metropolitan area estimates for 2004 will be published later in 2005.



## **WHAT IS DAWN LIVE!?**

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DAWN LIVE! is the secure, Internet-based query system that gives access to the data submitted for designated jurisdictions, metropolitan areas, and/or the nation as a whole. Authorized users can use DAWN LIVE! to monitor the drug-related cases seen in their area. All data in the system are de-identified.

## **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO USE DAWN LIVE!?**

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Access is restricted in accordance with Federal laws governing confidentiality of data. Only authorized users from eligible public health agencies may access DAWN LIVE! All users must agree to use the data within the confidentiality rules required by Federal law.

## **TRY DAWN LIVE!**

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Visit DAWN's online demonstration site to test drive DAWN LIVE! Just go to <https://demo.dawninfo.net/login.asp> and try it now.

## **HOW CAN WE GET INVOLVED?**

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Please contact DAWN Community Relations, Susan David, by phone at 240-453-2743, or by email at [susandavid@westat.com](mailto:susandavid@westat.com).

You may also contact Dr. Elizabeth Crane, DAWN, SAMHSA, at [elizabeth.crane@samhsa.hhs.gov](mailto:elizabeth.crane@samhsa.hhs.gov)